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## Working in Our Communities

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The work of the CADCs towards improving the care of Californians with dementia and their families extends beyond the clinic doors. The CADC specialists actively partner with community and state organizations to reach all Californians who are in need and can benefit from the expertise and services of the highly trained CADC staff. While not inclusive, these populations include the underserved or underinsured, individuals with specific cognitive symptoms or with less frequent dementia diagnoses, and Californians who may be unable to readily access the CADC due to distance constraints.

### Helping Californians Living with Early Memory Loss

The CADCs partner with the Alzheimer's Association in developing programming for early memory loss, such as, Early Memory Loss Forums and support groups for individuals living with MCI, their families, and caregivers. Because early memory loss frequently progresses to Alzheimer's disease, it is critical for patients and their families to be educated and informed about early memory loss and the risk of Alzheimer's disease.

Many older individuals may complain of memory problems, but still manage to independently accomplish all their customary tasks. Until recently, physicians were not able to provide any specific information concerning the significance of these complaints, or what they mean for the future. However, in the last few years, there has been a substantial increase in the number of clinical research studies focusing on patients with these complaints. Although much more work needs to be done, the characterization of this problem and its outcome is much better now than in the past. The syndrome of subjective memory problems has come to be commonly known as "Mild Cognitive Impairment" (MCI), although other terms have been used, including "Cognitive Impairment, Not Dementia" (CIND) and "early Alzheimer's disease."

### Helping Underserved Populations

The CADCs recognize that California is among the most culturally and ethnically diverse states in the U.S. Since their inception, the CADCs have placed an emphasis on reaching underserved people such as minorities, low-income persons and those living in rural or frontier communities where culture and geography pose particular challenges for Alzheimer treatment and care.

Diagnostic underreporting and obtaining a diagnosis at a later stage of Alzheimer's disease often occurs among people of color. This not only limits our understanding of the impact of Alzheimer's disease within the racially and culturally diverse communities of the state but can directly impact the individual living with Alzheimer's disease, since the effectiveness of medications, psychological or social interventions depends upon early intervention.

All of the Centers lend their expertise and partner with state and community organizations to provide services and education to underserved communities.

**Learn more about each Centers involvement in their community** [here](#) [1] and [here](#). [2]

Highlights from a few CADCs and their community collaborations include:

- Collaborating with the Family Caregiver Alliance to develop and deliver a statewide telephone-based caregiver education programs. Two programs were developed, one on memory loss and stroke, and a second on dementia in Spanish. Participants phoned into a central number where they listened to a live presentation. They were provided material either

via internet or in hard copy that they could follow during the presentation. Opportunities were provided both during and after each presentation for participants to have questions answered.

- The USC-Rancho/Los Amigos CADC partnered with the USC ADRC and the Los Angeles Latino Eye Study (LALES; funded by NIH-NEI) to conduct a community-based assessment of cognitive function among the Latino population 60 and older residing in La Puente, California.
- The UCSD-San Diego CADC worked with the UCSD Shiley-Marcos Alzheimer's Disease Research Center and the San Diego/Imperial Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association to provide services, outreach and research opportunities to our San Diego underserved Hispanic population. There are a variety of educational events and support groups conducted in both Spanish and English. An annual one-day Hispanic Caregiver Conference with all appropriate community partners is conducted entirely in Spanish to provide information and access to appropriate resources. For information about services and opportunities for Hispanics in San Diego, please contact the UCSD Shiley-Marcos Alzheimer's Disease Research Center at 858-622-5800.
- Community outreach efforts at the UCD-Sacramento CADC have expanded to encompass the broader community. Initial efforts included small informal presentations to groups and screening of individuals at health fairs and community events. Over the past two years, through partnerships with community groups and organizations, the UCD-Sacramento CADC's outreach efforts have evolved in having larger educational events that emphasize healthy brain aging, including the Spanish Mini-medical School (Latino community), Forum on Healthy Aging (African American community), and Bridge to Healthy Families (Asian American community). Each of these larger projects involve bilingual and bicultural health care professionals who are partnering with the staff at the UCD-Sacramento CADC to raise community awareness and promote healthy lifestyles.

## Providing Support for Caregivers

Caring for a person with Alzheimer's disease or another dementia is often very difficult and poses physical, emotional and economic challenges for the family. Learning how to handle these responsibilities is difficult. Throughout the State, specialists at the CADCs are actively sought as topic experts for support groups and hosting support groups.

Caregivers are trying to help their loved ones feel supported and continue to live a full life while trying to balance these same issue within their own lives. Support groups can provide an invaluable resource for caregivers to learn the skills necessary to cope with new and ongoing caregiving demands. Support groups are also helpful in providing information and support to help the caregiver preserve her/his well-being.

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